

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An automated method for managing a transaction involving an enterprise and at least one partner in a supply chain, the method comprising:  
receiving a request for the transaction from an end-user or the partner;  
5 accessing real-time data relevant to the transaction from an existing partner system;  
generating a context for the transaction using the real-time data; and  
processing the request in the context for the transaction.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said accessing comprises communicating with a partner coordinator component integrated with the existing partner system.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the real-time data comprises transaction data specifying a status for the transaction.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the real-time data comprises reference data relating to the partner.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein accessing comprises receiving the real-time data in extensible markup language (XML) format.

25 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising converting the real-time data into a format usable by a network system, the network system operable to maintain the context for the transaction.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising maintaining a context for the transaction at a network system.

30 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
identifying the context for the transaction based upon the request; and  
routing the request for processing of the transaction.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a response to the request to the end-user or the partner.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein processing comprises initiating a workflow for the transaction at a network system.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the workflow comprises a plurality of tasks to be performed by the enterprise or partner in order to fulfill the transaction.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein processing comprises notifying the partner of any tasks to be performed by the partner.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein processing comprises initiating at least one process manager routine for managing the workflow.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the workflow comprises a routing workflow for routing the request to the enterprise or the partner for performance of the tasks.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein processing comprises alerting the partner or the enterprise.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein processing comprises monitoring a service level associated with the transaction.

17. A system for managing a transaction involving an enterprise and at least one partner in a supply chain, the system comprising:

an interface operable to receive a request for the transaction from an end-user or the partner; and

a processing facility in communication with the interface, the processing facility operable to access real-time data relevant to the transaction from an existing partner system, the processing facility operable to generate a context for the transaction using the real-time data, the processing facility operable to process the request in the context for the transaction.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the real-time data comprises transaction data specifying a status of the transaction.

5 19. The system of claim 17, wherein the real-time data comprises reference data relating to the partner.

20. The system of claim 17, further comprising a database operable to maintain the context for the transaction.

10 21. The system of claim 20, wherein said database comprises a relational database.

15 22. The system of claim 17, wherein the real-time data is accessed in extensible markup language (XML) format.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein said processing facility is operable to convert real-time data into a format usable by the system.

20 24. The system of claim 22, wherein the processing facility is operable to send a response to the request to the end-user or the partner.

25 25. The system of claim 17, wherein the processing facility is operable to initiate a workflow for the transaction at a network system.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the workflow comprises a plurality of tasks to be performed by the enterprise or the partner in order to fulfill the transaction.

30 27. The system of claim 26, wherein the processing facility is operable to notify the partner of any tasks to be performed by the partner.

28. The system of claim 25, wherein the processing facility is operable to initiate at least one process manager routine for managing the workflow.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the workflow comprises a routing workflow for routing the request to the enterprise or the partner for performance of the tasks.

5 30. The system of claim 17, wherein processing facility is operable to alert the partner or the enterprise.

31. The method of claim 17, wherein the processing facility is operable to monitor a service level associated with the transaction.

10 32. A system for managing one or more transactions involving an enterprise and at least one partner in a supply chain, the system comprising:  
a database operable to store real-time data relating to the one or more transactions, the database operable to maintain a respective context for each  
15 transaction; and  
an execution process engine operable to execute a respective workflow in the context for each transaction using the real-time data, each workflow comprising a plurality of tasks to be performed by the enterprise or the partner in order to fulfill the respective transaction.

20 33. The system of claim 32, further comprising one or more process manager components operable to manage the workflows.

25 34. The system of claim 32, wherein at least one business object is generated for each workflow.

35. The system of claim 34, further comprising one or more business object managers operable to manage each business object.

30 36. The system of claim 32, wherein each workflow comprises a process for transforming the real-time data according to a business policy between the enterprise and the partner.

37. The system of claim 32, wherein the database is operable to maintain one or more business policies relating to the partner.

38. A system for processing a transaction involving an enterprise and at least one partner in a supply chain, the system comprising:  
a database operable to store real-time data relating to the transaction;  
at least one process workflow executing on a processing facility, the process workflow operable to process the transaction; and  
a data access layer operable to provide the process workflow access to the real-time data relating to the transaction, thereby providing a context for the transaction during processing.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the at least one workflow comprises a plurality of tasks to be performed by the enterprise or the partner in order to fulfill the respective transaction.

40. The system of claim 38, further comprising a business data manager component operable to manage the at least one process workflow.

41. A network system for managing a supply chain, the network system comprising:  
a network execution component operable to administer a transaction involving an enterprise and at least one partner in the supply chain; and  
a network domain gateway in communication with the network execution component, the network domain gateway operable to communicate with a partner coordinator component integrated with an existing system of the partner to provide real-time data relevant to the transaction from the existing system of the partner to the network execution component.

42. The network system of claim 41, wherein the network execution component executes at least one process workflow operable to transform the real-time data relevant to the transaction based on business rules for the supply chain.

43. The network system of claim 41, wherein the network domain gateway comprises a transport component operable to send or receive one or more messages related to the transaction.

5 44. The network system of claim 41, wherein the network domain gateway comprises a gateway router component operable to route one or more messages relating to the transaction between the existing system of a partner and an existing system of the enterprise.

10 45. The network system of claim 44, wherein the gateway router component is operable to perform context-based routing of messages related to the transaction.

15 46. The network system of claim 41, further comprising a messaging system operable to generate one or more messages for the real-time data and to route the messages within the network system.

20 47. The network system of claim 41, wherein the network execution component is operable to manage at least one process workflow for the transaction.

48. The network system of claim 41, further comprising a database operable to store the real-time data.

25 49. The network system of claim 48, wherein the database is operable to store a context for the transaction.

50. The network system of claim 48, wherein the database is operable to store one or more policy rules that govern the transaction.